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EDITORIAL NOTES

Superintendent F. D. Boynton, of Ithaca, N. Y., in his presidential address before the New York State Teachers' Association last December makes a forcible appeal for certain legislation reforms. The two facts which call for attention are the absence of men teachers and the large proportion of teachers who remain but a short time in the profession.

NEEDED SCHOOL LEGISLATION

"The former evil," as he justly remarks, "is not due to the competition between men and women." "The competition is not between men and women for the small and not overripe fruit of the educational tree, but between the school business as a business with other forms of business activity competing for both men and women who are able to assume and discharge large responsibilities."

The second evil is less talked about in the public press, but it is no less patent. "The annual influx of 43 per cent. of new men into teaching, the fact that only 27 per cent. of the total number of men engaged in teaching in a neighboring state have had even three years of experience, are indications of a prevailing unrest among teachers, and show that the schools are largely in the hands of novices, without experience and with no present intentions of remaining in the business, no matter what their plans may have been at the time of entering."

The reforms Superintendent Boynton advocates to meet the above evils are: (1) appointment upon merit alone; (2) appointment without limit as to time after a satisfactory probationary period has been successfully passed; (3) freedom from meddlesome and unprofessional interference in the discharge of duty; (4) increased remuneration, approaching that of other learned professions; (5) pensions for old age, to which the beneficiaries shall have contributed.

"The first is generally conceded, and in an increasingly large ratio appointments are first made upon merit. The second demand is not as universally recognized, but in the opinion of the New York State Council of School Superintendents, and of a large and growing number of educators some form of a tenure-of-office law is necessary for the immediate future welfare of our schools. So far as I have been able to learn, no good reason has yet been given why a teacher who has satisfactorily passed a probationary period should not be secure in his position so long as he continues to discharge his duties faithfully and efficiently, providing, however, that his character shall remain above reproach. That this is not the case, the advocates of tenure assert, is abundantly established by available statistics, and to this fact alone they attribute the constant change and unrest from which our schools continually suffer. On the other hand, the opponents of tenure claim that a teacher is now secure just so long as he faithfully and efficiently discharges

his duties as a schoolman, and as such he is free from political, social, fraternal, and religious interference. If we grant our opponents' position, then, as progressive educators, they should readily consent to the removal of a form which they themselves assert has lost its substance.

"But men leave the school business because of its uncertainties. Security in one's position, while actively and aggressively engaged in education, is of prime importance. Repeated and continued annual elections are not only an evidence of bad faith, but are as antiquated as the *a b c* method of teaching reading, or as the stage-coach as a means of travel—suited only to a pioneer period. Dismissal without sufficient cause, and without giving the accused a fair hearing, is un-American; it is the factory method of dealing with the 'hands'; and if it is to be continued, the teachers of this state should get ready to meet such treatment as factory hands meet it."

It is obvious that two aspects of reform of education ought to go hand in hand. We cannot afford to adopt measures which will confirm teachers who never ought to have been appointed. But, on the other hand, it is certainly true that a good teacher ought to be secure to do his work. The present writer is somewhat familiar with certain of the older academies in New England. They have no difficulty in securing men as teachers. They frequently can not keep them as long as they would like, because they can not pay them adequate salaries; nevertheless, they secure men teachers in larger proportion for the same salaries than do the public schools in the vicinity. One important reason for this is without doubt the permanency of tenure. The general method followed by colleges seems to meet the situation. Appointments in college positions are usually made at first for one or two years; then for a longer period. Appointment to a professorship is almost universally recognized as permanent. The colleges secure men; frequently they secure them at lower salary than is paid in the public schools. Unquestionably the element of permanence bulks largely in the greater attractiveness of the college position, although, of course, other elements are found there as well. We wish the New York teachers success.